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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 8 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hou Zhitong (China)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 652nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is a great honour for me to extend, on behalf of the Conference and myself, a warm welcome to the President of Argentine Republic, Dr. Carlos Menem, who will be addressing us today. Of course, there is no need for me to introduce the President. His success in modernizing the Argentine economy and fighting inflation, while at the same time reducing unemployment significantly, are well known and have deserved wide international recognition. In the field of international relations, we are all familiar with the concern and dedication of the President in respect of the great issues facing the international community in these times of change, in particular his decisive role in developing effective arrangements in Latin America to ensure that nuclear energy is utilized only for peaceful purposes. Other initiatives that he has taken in the political and economic fields have also contributed to strengthening peace and security in the region, in line with his deep concern with Latin American issues. I am sure that the President will be pleased to know that, among the many members of delegations and the public present today in the Council chamber, on the occasion of his visit, there is a delegation from the Congress of Chile, whom I also welcome among us.

His Excellency Carlos Menem also conducts a very active foreign policy in the global context, as is proved by his presence in Geneva this week and his personal contributions to various multilateral forums as well as a dynamic bilateral diplomacy at the highest level. His efforts to intensify the participation of Argentina in the international scene are equally reflected in this Conference. I assure you, Mr. President, that here in Geneva we are very well informed of your disarmament initiatives.

Allow me also, in my capacity as representative of China, to highlight the importance we attach to our relations with your great country. Argentina and China established diplomatic relations more than 20 years ago. Since then Sino-Argentine relations have continuously developed and improved in many areas. Friendly cooperation between the two countries has been raised to a new level by the mutual visits of high-level political leaders during recent years, especially the official visit of Chinese President Yang Shangkun to Argentina in May 1990 and the return visit to China by His Excellency President Carlos Menem in November of the same year. I am sure that all members of the Conference appreciate your decision to address us and will follow your statement with special interest. I now give the floor to the President of the Argentine Republic, his Excellency Mr. Carlos Menem.

Mr. MENEM (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me at the outset of my statement to thank you for the kind words with which you had the courtesy to welcome me to this plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. The People's Republic of China, which you represent, is one of the key participants in the historic epoch in which we live. It is an additional source of satisfaction for me as well as for my country to have the privilege of addressing this Conference under your presidency, as our two peoples, besides

being participants in and members of this forum, share a history of fertile, frank and friendly relations. The era in which it is our destiny to live is placed under the dual sign of challenge and hope.

(Mr. Menem, Argentina)

Challenge in the face of the need to ensure the coexistence of 5 billion people who make up an international system which is truly global in nature. It also bears the sign of hope, the hope of being able to fulfil our responsibilities at this time of transition towards what will be a new period in the history of mankind. The fall of the Berlin Wall prompted a natural triumphant euphoria because it represented the surmounting of a political and ideological confrontation that had thwarted strategic options for 40 years. The dynamics of international relations have also changed. Confrontation has been succeeded by a different order based on basic principles such as the renunciation of the use of force to settle international conflicts, and efforts to make respect for fundamental freedoms, democracy and human rights a reality. The renunciation of the use of force and the full-scale operation of the system of collective security enshrined in the United Nations Charter appear to be closer to implementation than ever before. There is also a growing international consensus on the need to preserve individual freedoms through the adoption of democratic political systems. Argentina supports the renewed role of the Security Council because we believe in the functioning of a stable international system where peace and security would not be jeopardized. This assertion is in no way invalidated by the many regrettable regional conflicts that are occurring today. These tragic situations would certainly be even worse were it not for the operation of the fundamental agreement which makes the effectiveness of the Security Council possible.

The Gulf war opened a new chapter in United Nations history as the collective security machinery worked efficiently and breaches of international peace and security were drastically curbed. A dramatic change has taken place in the organization and its responsibilities have proliferated through the peace-keeping and peace-making forces. This process has recently begun and promises to intensify in the future. My country has decided to contribute actively to the stability of the system by supporting and cooperating with the initiatives of the United Nations, as is shown by our participation in the Gulf war and the United Nations peace-keeping forces, to which we contributed the largest contingent from Latin America. The order that may be glimpsed brings us closer to the preservation of a system of shared values. All of us, absolutely all of us, must shoulder our responsibilities. The fragile equation of peace means not just the absence of war but the commitment to accept the other side as part of our destiny. Now that the era of blocs which divided the world is over, we must promote a regime of integration.

The end of the cold war has promoted a more constructive approach through the development of concepts such as "cooperative security". My country together with others seeks to secure the necessary means to reduce in a collective manner the possibility and scope of possible aggression. As a point of departure this presupposes agreement on priority tasks of national armed forces, namely the defence of the territory and participation in multinational forces for the

maintenance, establishment or restoration of peace. We wish to establish a regional security framework banning weapons of mass destruction, and set up an effective system of verification of compliance therewith, and to foster the consideration of a monitoring system for conventional armaments in the region, properly and adequately taking care of legitimate national defence requirements and stimulating a regional context of confidence, transparency and detente.

(Mr. Menem, Argentina)

An essential aspect of cooperative security lies in Chapter VII of the Charter, which confers on the United Nations the function of organizing multinational forces to confront aggression if it occurs. In this structure, the use of multinational forces is the last resort when all preventive or coercive measures have proved ineffective. This commitment brings efficiency and credibility to the system, thus contributing to prevention and deterrence.

The achievements made in international disarmament have been truly surprising. Among them are the START agreements for the elimination of strategic arms, the elimination of intermediate-range missiles, the reduction of conventional forces in Europe and the decision to eliminate chemical weapons through the recent Convention adopted this year. These achievements bear witness to the steady progress being made in this respect.

However, I should like to share some ideas with all of you. Firstly, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. There is a shared responsibility by all States to meet the commitment to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technologies. There are no watertight compartments in this matter. The risks are common to all of us, and consequently self-restraint is the prime duty incumbent upon us as responsible participants in international society. This principle of self-restraint is undoubtedly the expression of a commitment implicit in universal culture, the final goal of the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. The experience of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms by a country in the Middle East prior to the Gulf war, and of course the breach of its agreements, with the International Atomic Energy Agency, offer clear examples for future action by the international community.

No country is unimportant when it comes to preserving international security. The most modest fertilizer plant can quickly be converted into a supplier for chemical warfare; a small reactor may build up the critical mass to be used in a nuclear warhead. Hence non-proliferation becomes of self-evident importance in building a much safer world. My Government has been guided by these principles in its domestic and international actions. Firstly, we have drawn up and adopted a body of domestic legislation instituting a strict system of export control related to chemical, biological, nuclear and missile materials, and established a national commission for the control of sensitive exports which is now fully operational. This is reinforced by our well-known efforts together with Brazil as part of a common nuclear policy which culminated in the establishment of a bi-national verification agency and the full-scope safeguards agreement with IAEA. Again, along with Mexico and Chile we have promoted and approved the amendments to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will very shortly come

fully into force, thus bringing into being the first effective and verifiably nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world.

Our country has also decided to accede to the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Through these measures we have reaffirmed the decision of our Government to have a conventional military capacity and equipment for strictly defensive purposes.

(Mr. Menem, Argentina)

Second, we also know that without transparency there will be no confidence. One of the most promising trends in the field of security and disarmament diplomacy is the growing importance of confidence-building measures. The establishment of an international register of arms transfers and other similar mechanisms for confidence-building must be consolidated through their implementation and gradual improvement. This strengthens the principle of self-defence in the face of any surreptitious attempt to prepare surprise attacks. Argentina has resolutely joined this process, and we are working with Latin American Governments to make military transparency a common principle in our region. We support the initiative for the convening of a regional conference on the confidence-building measures in Latin America. We must evaluate their possible adaptation to our regional circumstances and shoulder our responsibilities in the area of defence and security.

As a third idea we must think of the maintenance and restoration of peace, this complex and multi-faceted task involved in building a structure of confidence for world security. Here I am not referring to mere respect for contractual commitments, but to the specific action required to deal with breaches of commitments or of international law. At times it is necessary to restore what has been broken. This is where the United Nations acquires a leading role in restoring peace. Argentina actively supports the implementation of the United Nations Charter because it believes that only through its application will the Organization become effective.

The post-cold-war order is in the process of construction, and each of us on this planet bears a responsibility in its design. Argentina has entered into international commitments at both regional and global levels, as a positive contribution to creating stability in international relations based on these principles. My Government proposes as the main objective of its security policy to seek - through dialogue - a greater degree of confidence among nations by means of the creation of transparent forms of cooperation that will foster a stable and democratic international order which will preserve international peace and security.

We are living in a world in transition. Our view is that this opens up for mankind a window of opportunities without historical precedent. To explore these opportunities is the last challenge of this century. Like Clio, the muse of the historical past in mythology, history with a capital H stands before us. It carries with it the sempiternal questions, those that relate to peace and war,

the destruction or creation of a world of peace. Let us find the means of providing the answers to those age-old questions. Let us be capable of imagining a world of cooperative security - a world where peace will be a definitive reality, with the full force of our belief in God, the source of all reason and justice. Thank you very much. May God bless you.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the President of the Argentine Republic, Dr. Carlos Menem, for his important and far-reaching statement which will constitute an important point of reference for our work

(The President)

in the Conference on Disarmament. I also wish to thank him deeply for the kind words he addressed to my country and to myself. I now intend to suspend the meeting for five minutes so that I may accompany the President of the Argentine Republic on his departure from the Palais des Nations. May I invite delegations to remain in the conference room until the President leaves.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 10.45 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): The 652nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I also have on the list of speakers for today the representative of Peru, Ambassador Urrutia, who is present in the plenary for the first time since he assumed his new functions. I welcome him warmly and wish to assure him of the close cooperation of my delegation in the exercise of the heavy responsibilities assigned to him by his Government. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Peru, Ambassador Urrutia.

Mr. URRUTIA (Peru) (translated from Spanish): It is a great honour for me today to address this plenary for the first time in my capacity as head of the delegation of Peru to the sole multilateral negotiating disarmament body. I am particularly pleased to do so, moreover, under your Presidency, Ambassador Hou Zhitong, because I am aware of your great personal skills and because you represent a country with large responsibilities in the matter at hand, with which Peru maintains excellent relations. My delegation also thanks your predecessor, Ambassador Gerald Shannon, and the delegation of Canada for the effective way in which they guided the work of the Conference in the previous period.

Destiny has willed it that my first statement in plenary has been preceded by the important and very significant statement by his Excellency the President of the Argentine Republic, Dr. Carlos Menem, the first Latin American head of State to appear before this Conference and the leader of a brother country whose links with my own go back many centuries. The presence of President Menem - whose words I had the privilege to hear yesterday at the International Labour Conference - should be interpreted as a demonstration of commitment not only by the Argentine Republic but by all of Latin America to peace, disarmament and international security and the strengthening of this forum.

Allow me through you, Mr. President, to extend to all the delegations of member States, the observers and His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the entire secretariat, the cordial greetings of the Government of Peru, my own and those of my delegation. As of now I should like to pledge our fullest cooperation so that together we can discharge the lofty duties that his forum is to assume in the new international post-cold-war context. In taking up the special task entrusted to me by my Government of representing it before this Conference, I should also like to extend my gratitude for the tokens of understanding and appreciation expressed by many delegations for the work of my predecessor Ambassador Oswaldo de Rivero and Minister Counsellor Felix Calderón. We shall do everything

(Mr. Urrutia, Peru)

necessary to continue the excellent work performed by Ambassador de Rivero and thus to serve the common interests of Peru and those of this Conference on Disarmament.

It is not my intention at this time to dwell on all the important issues which are part of our written agenda or our ideal agenda in the new international context. I will reserve that task for a forthcoming meeting of the Conference. Nevertheless, I shall briefly refer to some fundamental aspects. Allow me first of all to reaffirm the very keen interest of Peru in the work of this Conference, as well as the work it may carry out in future. The world was happily able to survive the grave risks of nuclear confrontation which characterized the East-West confrontation, but as has been said here by very distinguished speakers the world is currently no more secure than before but more complicated. The states of equilibrium are more complex and less obvious, and the risks and threats have diversified. In the face of this we must pursue the evaluation and identification of the current components of international security and begin to work on that basis in the aspects which fall to us. The report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on "New dimensions of disarmament and arms regulations in the post-cold-war era" contains important elements in this direction.

A comprehensive nuclear-test-bank treaty (CTBT) should be this Conference's first priority. We firmly hope that the positive trends in the current context will be confirmed and that we will soon be able to begin preliminary work on the drafting of the treaty here. In this context we should like to express our gratitude to Sweden for submitting a new version of its draft treaty, and to Ambassador Tanaka of Japan for the effective manner in which he has been conducting the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. We hope that the draft decision submitted by the Group of 21 on this item will receive the support of all the members of the Conference.

Peru supports the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995. This Treaty constitutes the corner-stone of the world's non-proliferation regime and, far from questioning it in one way or another, we must reaffirm our confidence in it, extend it

indefinitely and do everything necessary to achieve full compliance with each and every one of its provisions. The same principle of pacta sunt servanda which we apply in good faith in all our international commitments must be demanded here without any discrimination whatsoever. The full realization of the objectives and purposes of the Treaty will derive from the firm political will of the States parties rather than from a sword of Damocles hanging threateningly over it. The Conference on Disarmament can and must contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. The beginning of work to draft a treaty for the cessation of nuclear testing and the search for an instrument acceptable to all providing security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons, inter alia, would be two steps which in themselves would justify the efforts of this Conference, without detracting from the others. We appeal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the non-proliferation treaty.

(Mr. Urrutia, Peru)

We also welcome the progress that is being made in the context of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We hope that the regime established therein will soon enter into force for all States in the region. Tlatelolco is undoubtedly one of Latin America's greatest contributions to international peace and stability. I might also mention, inter alia, the 1974 Declaration of Ayacucho and the 1991 Cartagena and Mendoza declarations.

I am also happy to highlight the recent election of a distinguished Peruvian diplomat as Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL) based in Mexico.

Peru supports all the efforts made in this Conference and elsewhere to give transparency to the acquisition and production of armaments as an important confidence-building measure. We have supported all United Nations resolutions in this field and we hope soon to convey the information requested to the Secretary-General. The Congress of my country, which is currently revising the Constitution of the Republic, will in due course take up for approval the Convention on chemical weapons drawn up in Geneva by many of those present here. Some of the concepts contained in the Convention, however, have already been incorporated in the draft Constitution which is to be adopted in the next few months.

Finally, and without wishing to exhaustive on the items of interest to us, my country supports the early, though limited, expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We stand ready to give our consent to such a move as long as it maintains a geographical and strategic balance amongst its members.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of Peru for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

We shall now proceed to consider the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies next week. As agreed at the Presidential consultations, the Conference will hold a plenary meeting on Wednesday, 16 June at 10 a.m. to listen to the address to be delivered by His Excellency the President of Romania. So far, the regular plenary meeting on Thursday, 17 June is maintained. I intend to return to this question at the Presidential consultations tomorrow afternoon, after our informal meeting, in the light of the situation concerning the list of speakers for that date. The timetable is, of course, purely indicative and has been prepared in consultation with the chairmen of the ad hoc committees. As usual, it is subject to change if necessary. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): In accordance with the timetable just adopted, the next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Wednesday, 16 June at 10 a.m. As in the case of this plenary meeting, I invite members to make themselves available at 10 a.m. at the latest, so that the plenary meeting may begin as soon as the President of Romania arrives. I also invite members to wear their identification badges in order to facilitate entrance to the conference room, as well as to the gallery.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.